Hike in natural gas prices

732. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Power Ministry and various State Governments including Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh have vehemently opposed Ministry's proposal to hike gas prices to Rs. 4,200 per thousand cubic meters by January 1, 2003 and subsequently to Rs. 5,800 per thousand cubic meters from April;

(b) if so, the reasons for the objections of the Power Ministry and various States; and

(c) to what extent Government have dropped the proposal in view of the great opposition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b)Yes, Sir. The main objections raised by Union Power Ministry and some State Governments has been that increase in the natural gas prices would lead to increase in the cost of production of power. It will be difficult to realize the higher power tariff from the consumers by the State Electricity Boards which are already under serious financial crisis. Increase in the gas price will have cascading effect in agriculture and other sectors of economy.

(c) No decision in the matter has been taken.

Revision of commission to petrol dealer

733. PROF. M. M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Commission of Petrol dealers also gets affected due to the daily fluctuation in petrol prices in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that petrol dealers have presented a memorandum to Government recently in order to increase their commission;

(c) if so, the details thereof and necessary action taken by Government in this regard; and

(d) the effective steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government so far to fix the commission of petrol dealer as per the percentage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (d) With the dismantling of the Administered Pricing Mechanism in the petroleum sector effective 1.4.02, the Government is no longer fixing the dealers' commission on petrol and diesel, which is now being fixed by the oil companies. Some elements of the commission depend upon the prices of petrol and diesel.

The oil companies have last revised the dealers' commission effective 1.11.02. As per this revision, the dealers' commission on petrol was increased from Rs. 613/KL to Rs. 639/KL and on diesel from Rs. 365/KL to Rs. 385/KL.

Remedy for oil spills at sea

734. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has developed a product, Oilzapper, as an environment friendly remedy for oil spills at sea;

(b) whether it is a fact that Oilzapper was developed by the Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) in a project supported by the Department of Bio-Technology (DBT); and

(c) if so, the details of this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Oilzapper is carrier based (powdered corncob) efficient crude oil and oily sludge degrading bacterial consortia which can degrade petroleum sludge and treat crude oil spills. Oilzapper can degrade toxic hydrocarbons present in petroleum sludge and crude oil to carbon-di-oxide and water and is an environment friendly technology. Shelf life of oilzapper is 3 months at ambient temperature. Oilzapper can be packed in polybags and easily transported to the sites of refinery for treatment of petroleum sludge (waste after refining of crude oil) or accidental crude oil spill sites for its treatment. The technology has been transferred to Sriram Biotech